

Remarks/Arguments

In the July 14, 2006 office action, claims 19 and 22 were rejected under section 112, first paragraph, because "the specification never discloses wherein the cutting units are less than 18 inches." Claims 1, 2, 5 and 7-10 were rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ronning (US Patent 1,957,079) in view of Akgulian et al (US Patent 3,613,337) and Rhoades et al (US Patent 2,924,928). Claim 3 was rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ronning, Akgulian et al '337 and Rhoades, and further in view of Bednar et al (US Patent 6,336,312). Claims 11, 12 and 18 were rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akgulian et al in view of Ronning. Claim 13 was rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akgulian and Ronning in view of Worthington (US Patent 1,330,293). Claim 15 was rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akgulian and Ronning in view of Hornung (US Patent 6,684,616). Claim 16 was rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akgulian and Ronning in view of Gerzanich (US Patent 4,341,059). Claim 17 was rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akgulian and Ronning in view of Speiser (US Patent 3,410,063). Claims 19 and 22 were rejected under section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ronning in view of Rhoades.

In response to the section 112 rejection, claim 19 is amended to specify the first row includes two cutting units less than about 18 inches in front of the front pair of axles and the second row includes a center cutting unit and two outside cutting units less than about 18 inches behind the front pair of axles. The subject matter of claim 19 is found at paragraph 35 of the specification as filed: "For example, each cutting unit may be positioned less than about 18 inches in front of or behind the left and right front axles."

Additionally, claim 1 is amended to specify a pair of non-driven front wheels and front axles independently mounted at the front end of the chassis, a first row of two cutting units in front of the pair of front axles mounted to horizontally extending lift arms; a second row of three cutting units behind the pair of front axles and forward of the operator module and power supply, and horizontally extending lift arms that pivot to lift and rotate the two cutting units to a full vertical transport position inside the track width of the pair of rear wheels.

Claim 1 is patentable over Ronning, Akgulian and Rhoades.

Ronning fails to disclose cutting units behind the front axles. Instead, Ronning's first and second rows of cutting units are in front of front wheels 15. In fact, Ronning's cutting units are so far in front of the front wheels that the cutting units must be shifted when the tractor is steered, as explained on page 2, line 125 - page 3, line 4. Ronning also fails to disclose raising and rotating the cutting units to a full vertical position.

There is no suggestion to modify Ronning by moving the second row of cutting units (C, D and E) behind front wheels 15. Ronning's engine 11 would cover any center cutting unit that was moved behind front wheels 15. There is no suggestion to move Ronning's engine 11 behind operator station 13. Ronning also fails to disclose raising any cutting units to a full vertical position.

Akgulian fails to disclose a pair of non-driven front wheels on front axles. Instead, Akgulian's front wheels 16 are powered or traction wheels. Akgulian also fails to disclose a second row of cutting units in front of the operator's station. Instead, the second row of wing mowers 29-31 including the center unit are directly under Akgulian's operator's seat 12. Additionally, Akgulian fails to disclose raising and rotating cutting units to a full vertical position within the track width of the rear wheels. As shown in Fig. 2, when Akgulian's wing mowers 29, 30 are raised, they are outside the track width of front wheels 16. They also would remain outside the track width of steered rear wheels 14, which have a smaller track width than the front wheels.

There is no suggestion to modify Akgulian by moving operator's seat 12 behind the second row of wing mowers 29-31. There is no suggestion to replace Akgulian's driven front wheels with non-driven front wheels. There is no suggestion how to raise and rotate Akgulian's wing mowers so they would be within the widest track width.

Rhoades fails to disclose rows of cutting units in front or behind front wheels 8. Instead, Rhoades shows a single rotary lawn mowing element 11 between the front and rear wheels.

Even if Ronning, Akgulian and Rhoades were combined, the combination would still fail to disclose a second row of cutting units behind the front axles of non-driven wheels. In each cited reference, the engine or operator's station would cover

any cutting unit that could be positioned behind the front pair of wheels. Additionally, the cited references fail to show cutting units that can be raised and rotated to a full vertical transport position inside the track width of the pair of rear wheels.

Claims 2-3 and 5, 7 and 9-10 are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

Claim 11 is amended to specify non-driven front wheels, a first row of two cutting units mounted to pivotable arms extending from the front end of the chassis so that each cutting unit in the first row is in front of the pair of front axles, and a second row of three cutting units mounted to pivotable arms extending from the chassis so that each cutting unit in the second row is behind the pair of front axles.

Claim 11 is patentable over Akgulian and Ronning.

Akgulian fails to disclose a pair of non-driven front wheels. Instead, Akgulian's front wheels 16 are powered or traction wheels. Akgulian also fails to disclose an operator's station at least primarily behind the second row of cutting units. Instead, Akgulian's operator's seat 12 is directly over the center mower 31 in the second row of wing mowers 29-31. Additionally, Akgulian fails to disclose pivotable arms in the second row movable to at least two distinct positions; one of the positions raising and rotating two of the cutting units to a full vertical position within the widest track of the wheels. Instead, as shown in Fig. 2, if Akgulian's wing mowers 29, 30 are raised, they are outside the track width of front wheels 16 and rear wheels 14.

There is no suggestion to move Akgulian's operator's seat 12 and engine 11 toward the rear of the vehicle so the seat would not cover cutting unit 31. There is no suggestion to replace Akgulian's driven front wheels with non-driven front wheels. There is no suggestion to raise and rotate Akgulian's wing mowers so they are within the widest track width.

Ronning fails to disclose cutting units behind the front axles. Instead, Ronning's first and second rows of cutting units are in front of front wheels 15. Ronning's cutting units are so far in front of the front wheels that they must be shifted when the tractor is steered, as explained on page 2, line 125 - page 3, line 4. Ronning also fails to disclose an engine behind the operator's station, and fails to disclose raising and rotating the cutting units to a full vertical position.

There is no suggestion to modify Ronning by moving the second row of cutting units (C, D and E) behind front wheels 15. Ronning's engine 11 would cover

any center cutting unit that was moved behind front wheels 15. There is no suggestion to move Ronning's engine 11 behind operator station 13. Ronning also fails to disclose raising any cutting units to a full vertical position.

Even if Akgulian and Ronning were combined, the combination would still fail to disclose an operator's station at least primarily behind a second row of cutting units, and an engine behind the operator's station. Instead, each cited reference shows an engine or operator's station directly above any cutting unit that is or could be positioned behind the front pair of wheels. Additionally, the cited references fail to show cutting units that can be raised and rotated to a full vertical transport position inside the widest track width of the front and rear wheels.

Claims 12-13 and 15-18 are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 11.

Claim 19 is amended to specify a front pair of non-driven wheels mounted on a front pair of axles independently mounted to the chassis, a pair of rear wheels driven by the power supply, a first row of cutting units including two cutting units less than about 18 inches in front of the front pair of axles and the second row including a center cutting unit and two outside cutting units less than about 18 inches behind the front pair of axles; each of the cutting units in the second row being in front of the operator module and the power supply in a mowing position, the outside cutting units being within the track width of the rear wheels if the outside cutting units are raised and rotated to a transporting position.

Claim 19 is patentable over Ronning and Rhoades.

Ronning fails to disclose any cutting units less than about 18 inches behind the front axles. Instead, all of Ronning's cutting units are so far ahead of front wheels 15 that they must be shifted when the tractor is steered, as explained on page 2, line 125 - page 3, line 4. Ronning also fails to disclose raising and rotating the cutting units to a full vertical position. Ronning also fails to disclose an operator's station in front of a power supply. Instead, Ronning's operator station 12 is behind engine 11.

There is no suggestion to modify Ronning by moving the second row of cutting units (C, D and E) behind front wheels 15. Ronning's engine 11 would cover any center cutting unit that was moved behind front wheels 15. There is no suggestion to move Ronning's engine 11 behind operator station 13. Ronning also fails to disclose raising any cutting units to a full vertical position.

Rhoades fails to disclose any rows of cutting units in front or behind front wheels 8. Instead, Rhoades shows a single rotary lawn mowing element 11 between the front and rear wheels.

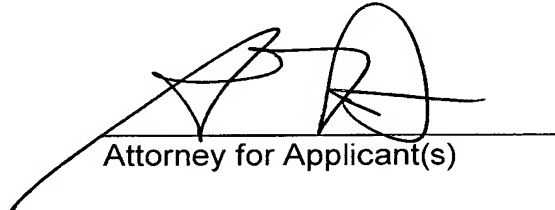
Even if Ronning and Rhoades were combined, the combination would still fail to disclose a second row of cutting units less than about 18 inches behind the front axles of non-driven wheels. In each cited reference, the engine or operator's station would cover any cutting unit that might be located behind the front pair of wheels. Additionally, the cited references fail to show cutting units that can be raised and rotated to a full vertical transport position inside the track width of the rear wheels.

Claim 22 is patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 19.

In conclusion, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully,



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